

Monitoring Focus and Priority Schools

Guiding Questions for Principal and Focus Groups

School Leadership - Turnaround Principle 1: Ensuring that the principal has the ability to lead the turnaround effort.

- 1.1 What is the mission/vision (purpose/direction) of the school? How was it developed? How is it articulated to the community?
- 1.2 Who is responsible in developing/writing the school improvement plan? Who identifies the goals? Are they SMART goals? How often is the plan reviewed during the school year? Who are the reviewers?
- 1.3 How does the principal ensure that students and adults feel safe and ready to teach/learn? Is there a behavior system in place? Who monitors this system? How often is the system reviewed and by whom?
- 1.4 How does the principal communicate high expectations to staff, students, and families? How does the principal respond when adults display low assumptions about student potential?
- 1.5 How does the principal ensure that the curriculum is standards-based and rigorous? (Lesson plans? Intentional walkthroughs?) How does the principal ensure that formative assessments in ELA and math are standards-based?
- 1.6 How does the principal ensure that instruction is adjusted based on formative and/or summative assessments? (data chats/classroom walkthroughs/evaluations)
- 1.7 How often does the principal observe/evaluate the teachers? How is the data collected during these observations/evaluations used to improve student learning? (PD? Priorities for the school?)
- 1.8 Are teachers' planning times scheduled for collaboration of grade/content areas? For example, one grade level scheduled at the same time or an entire department? What is expected of teachers during planning periods? (PD from peers? Team meetings?) (7.3)
- 1.9 What is the process for hiring new teachers? How are decisions regarding staffing made? Is every classroom staffed with a full-time, certified teacher? (5.1)
- 1.10 How does the principal and staff increase academically-focused family and community engagement? How are successes celebrated? How does the principal/school receive input from the stakeholders?

Climate and Culture - Turnaround Principle 2: Establish a school environment that supports the social, emotional, and learning needs of all students.

- 2.1 Is there a clear and consistent behavior system in place? Are goals set regarding behavior based on the analysis of data? What systems are in place to ensure staff and student safety?
- 2.2 How do you support at-risk students and meet their needs: academically, emotionally, and socially?
How are teachers' needs met? How is feedback delivered to teachers?
- 2.3 How are high expectations communicated to staff, students and families?

Effective Instruction - Turnaround Principle 3: Ensure that teachers utilize research-based, rigorous effective instruction to meet the needs of all students and aligned with State Standards.

- 3.1 How do students know what they are expected to learn? Are standards/objectives posted in the rooms? If asked, could a student tell me what he was to be learning on any given day?
- 3.2 How do you use student learning data to inform the selection of instructional strategies?
- 3.3 How do you stay informed of teaching/progress monitoring strategies? Describe some of the strategies used to check for understanding in your classroom.
- 3.4 How do you know that students are engaged and not just being compliant?
- 3.5 What are some examples of student learning data used in the school/classroom? How often is student learning data reviewed by the teachers? What interventions are in place for students not mastering the standards?
- 3.6 How would you describe the behavior of the students in the school? Is it consistent across all classrooms?

Curriculum, Assessment, and Intervention System - Turnaround Principle 4: Ensure that teachers have the foundational documents and instructional materials needed to teach to the rigorous college-and career- ready standards.

- 4.1 What evidence could be used to verify the curriculum is linked to College and Career Ready Standards? Where can a teacher find these standards?
- 4.2 How do you plan what you are teaching? How does the principal know you are teaching the proper standards? (Lesson plans? Walkthroughs?)
- 4.3 What formative assessments are used by the school to gauge student learning? Do you review the results of these assessments? When? With whom?
- 4.4 Do you feel you have the proper instructional materials and resources aligned with CCR work?
- 4.5 What is the intervention system for students who are two or more years behind in ELA and math? How often is the system reviewed? Is the system used properly and with fidelity?

Effective Staffing Practices - Turnaround Principle 5: Develop skills to better recruit, retain and develop effective teachers.

- 5.1 What is the process for hiring new teachers? How are decisions regarding staffing made? Is every classroom staffed with a full-time, certified teacher?
- 5.2 How often are teachers observed? Do they receive feedback afterwards? What evaluation system is in place?
- 5.3 and 5.5 What are some examples of professional development provided? Who decides what PD is needed and how it is delivered? How does the principal know that the PD was effective and implemented in classrooms?
- 5.4 How do teachers know if they are not performing to expectation? Is there support for those who need it?

Use of Data - Turnaround Principle 6: Ensure the school-wide use of data focused on improving teaching and learning.

- 6.1 What are some examples of communication between school and home that provide parents data on student progress, attendance, behavior?
- 6.2 Describe the data management system that is currently in place. Who has access to the data? Is it user-friendly?
- 6.3 How often do teachers review data? Which teachers are involved? Who leads the review? How often? What is the outcome of the review? (PD? Teaching strategy?)

Effective Use of Time - Turnaround Principle 7: Redesign time to better meet student and teacher learning needs and increase teacher collaboration focusing on improving teaching and learning.

- 7.1 When do teachers know what they will be teaching the following year? How is the master schedule arranged? Who develops the schedule?
- 7.2 How is remediation for students represented in the schedule? Is there a scheduled intervention program?
- 7.3 Are teachers' planning times scheduled for collaboration of grade/content areas? For example, one grade level scheduled at the same time or an entire department? What is expected of teachers during planning periods? (PD from peers? Team meetings?)

Effective Family and Community Engagement - Turnaround Principle 8: Increase academically focused family and community engagement.

- 8.1 How are families engaged in academically related activities and school decision-making? Do families feel included? How do you know?
- 8.2 What relationships has the school cultivated with community partners who offer services to families to assist in breaking down social, personal, and academic barriers for learning? How are students identified who need this support system?